

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for enabling a user to purchase an item displayed on a display screen of a television receiver, said system comprising:

5 means adapted to be coupled to said television receiver for receiving television signals representative of a number of items offered for sale and for providing the received television signals to said television receiver so as to enable the item or items offered for sale to be displayed on said display screen; and

10 reading means for reading information from a card and for forwarding the read information to the receiving and providing means.

2. A system as in claim 1, wherein the receiving and providing means includes means for processing the read information in a predetermined manner and for outputting the same for supply to an external destination so as to enable payment for a desired item.

15 3. A system as in claim 2, wherein said card includes a magnetic storage area having information stored therein and wherein said reading means reads the stored information from said magnetic storage area.

4. A system as in claim 2, wherein said card includes an integrated circuit (IC) chip having information stored therein and wherein said reading means reads the stored information from said IC chip.

20 5. A system as in claim 2, wherein the receiving and providing means includes a set-top box.

6. A system as in claim 2, wherein the reading means is coupled to the receiving and providing means by way of a data line and wherein the reading means forwards the read information to said receiving and providing means by way of said data line.

7. A system as in claim 2, wherein the reading means includes transmitting means for transmitting the read information in a wireless manner to the receiving and providing means.

8. A system for enabling a user to purchase an item displayed on a display screen of a television receiver, said system comprising:

a commerce device coupled to said television receiver adapted to receive television signals representative of a number of items offered for sale and provide the received television signals to said television receiver so as to enable the item or items offered for sale to be displayed on said display screen; and

a card reader adapted to read information from a card and forward the read information to the commerce device.

9. A system as in claim 8, wherein the commerce device includes a processor and a back-channel for processing the read information in a predetermined manner and for outputting the same for supply to an external destination so as to enable payment for a desired item.

10. A system as in claim 9, wherein said card includes a magnetic storage area having information stored therein and wherein said card reader reads the stored information from said magnetic storage area.

11. A system as in claim 9, wherein said card includes an integrated circuit (IC) chip having information stored therein and wherein said card reader reads the stored information from said IC chip.

12. A system as in claim 9, wherein the commerce device is a set-top box.

13. A system as in claim 9, wherein the card reader is coupled to the commerce device by way of a data line and wherein the card reader forwards the read information to said commerce device by way of said data line.

5 14. A system as in claim 9, wherein the card reader includes a transmitter which transmits the read information in a wireless manner to the commerce device.

15. A system for enabling a user to purchase an item displayed on a display screen of a television receiver, said system comprising:

10 a set-top box having a processor and a back-channel and adapted to receive television signals representative of a number of items offered for sale and provide the received television signals to said television receiver so as to enable the item or items offered for sale to be displayed on said display screen; and

a credit card reader adapted to read information from a credit card when said credit card is provided thereto by said user and forward the read information to the set-top box,

15 wherein said set-top box processes the information received from said credit card reader in a predetermined manner and outputs the same by way of the back-channel for supply to an external destination so as to enable payment for a desired item.

20 16. A system as in claim 15, wherein said credit card includes a magnetic storage area having information stored therein and wherein said credit card reader reads the stored information from said magnetic storage area.

17. A system as in claim 15, wherein said credit card includes an integrated circuit (IC) chip having information stored therein and wherein said credit card reader reads the stored information from said IC chip.

18. A system as in claim 15, wherein the external destination is one of a store, a credit card company, and a manufacturer.

19. A method for enabling a user to purchase an item displayed on a display screen of a television receiver, the method comprising the steps of:

5 receiving television signals at a receiving device representative of a number of items offered for sale and providing the received television signals to a television receiver so as to enable the item or items offered for sale to be displayed on said display screen; and

reading information from a card and forwarding the read information to the receiving device.

10 20. A method as in claim 19, further comprising the steps of processing the read information in a predetermined manner from the receiving device and outputting the same for supply to an external destination so as to enable payment for a desired item.

15 21. A method as in claim 20, wherein said card includes a magnetic storage area having information stored therein and wherein the stored information is read from said magnetic storage area during the reading step.

22. A method as in claim 20, wherein said card includes an integrated circuit (IC) chip having information stored therein and wherein the stored information is read from said IC chip during the reading step.

23. A method as in claim 20, wherein the receiving device includes a set-top box.

20 24. A method as in claim 20, wherein the read information is forwarded to said receiving device by way of a data line.

25. A method as in claim 20, wherein the read information is forwarded in a wireless manner to the receiving device.

26. A method for enabling a user to purchase an item displayed on a display screen of a television receiver, said method comprising the steps of:

coupling a set-top box having a processor and a back-channel so as to receive television signals representative of a number of items offered for sale and provide the received television signals to said television receiver so as to enable the item or items offered for sale to be displayed on said display screen; and

reading information from a credit card by use of a credit card reader when said credit card is provided thereto by said user and forwarding the read information to the set-top box,

wherein said set-top box processes the information received from said credit card reader in a predetermined manner and outputs the same by way of the back-channel for supply to an external destination so as to enable payment for a desired item.

27. A method as in claim 26, wherein said credit card includes a magnetic storage area having information stored therein and wherein said credit card reader reads the stored information from said magnetic storage area.

28. A method as in claim 26, wherein said credit card includes an integrated circuit (IC) chip having information stored therein and wherein said credit card reader reads the stored information from said IC chip.

29. A method as in claim 26, wherein the external destination is one of a store, a credit card company, and a manufacturer.